



The TTU Polyglot Fall 2016

A Message from Interim Chair Mark Groundland

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It is that time of year again to reflect on the outstanding accomplishments of our students, faculty and alumni. The 2015-2016 academic year was indeed exciting and productive. In these pages you will read about our students' achievements, ranging from undergraduate research to their stud-

Kicking Off Academic Year 2016-17: Fall Meet-&-Greet

A meet-and-greet party held in Oakley Hall Aug. 25 helped kick off fall semester 2016 for students majoring in foreign languages (FL) or international business and cultures (IBAC). Faculty and advisors from those programs gathered with the students to socialize and eat pizza. The FL and IBAC majors also signed up for door prizes.

Senior Kaylee Lankford, who is working toward both a B.A. in Spanish and a B.S. in exercise science (pre-physical therapy), won the grand prize: a unique rotating and floating globe. Jeremiah Davis,

ying abroad experiences. You will also learn about our faculty's research endeavors and innovative course offerings. We will share news of our recent graduates as they continue to be very marketable in today's global marketplace. You can read updates from a broad sampling of our alumni,

a junior majoring in both Spanish and IBAC, won 2nd prize: a Rand McNally wall map of the world. After the drawing, stress balls designed like little models of the earth were given to every student in attendance. "Not, of course," Interim DFL Chair Mark Groundland jokingly commented, "that you'll

gleaned from a recent alumni survey.

We would love for you to share any news you may have for us to publish in future newsletters. Please feel free to contact me at mgroundland@tntech.edu. I look forward to hearing from you. 🌍

have any stress during the semester!"

Well, if and when the students DO encounter any stressful situations this semester, maybe they can "take it out on the world" by squeezing the little stress ball. Best wishes to all our current students for a great academic year! 🌍



Focus on Students



Sarah Gillespie

My foreign language studies started in high school, where I studied French as my concentration of study. I first became interested in French because, to me, the sound of the language embodies elegance, beauty and intellect.

The summer before starting college, I went on a medical missionary trip to Haiti, where I served as a pharmacist's assistant and provided medicine to a small community. The experience of interacting with the Haitians in French made me decide to study French in college. Before my trip to Haiti, I actually wanted to study English and become a book editor, but now I'm studying French and pursuing a foreign language teaching license because of how impactful my foreign language teachers here and in high school have been.

During the summer of 2015, I studied abroad in Lyon,

France and spent a week in the French Riviera with Dr. Colleen Hays' directed studies class. We went to the Cannes Film Festival where we watched a French film, walked along the Riviera, and saw Woody Allen walk the red carpet. Going to the Cannes Film Festival was a dream of mine because every time I get a chance to go home, my dad and I have a tradition of watching a movie. Since I started studying French, my dad and I have been watching French comedies and dramas. We've talked about going to the festival in France to see the strange foreign films being spotlighted. That summer my abilities and interest in French got me there, and it was better than I could have ever imagined! I remember waiting in line for an hour, finding my bright, red seat and feeling so excited and nervous when the lights

started to dim and the movie started to play.

After the trip with Dr. Hays ended, I went to Lyon, France to complete a month-long program and to live with a French family. The immersion in French culture has helped me the most in my language studies. I only spent a month in France, but I made tremendous progress. I also learned while abroad how much I had learned in my courses and how much I have left to learn.

This past summer I studied abroad in Berlin, Germany. The Euro Cup was being held in France at the time, so I got to experience the passion of German soccer fans. Rad Cuebas and I went to the public viewings of the German national team games at Brandenburg Gate, and the enthusiasm of those soccer fans cannot be matched by any American football fan.

When I think about all the places I've seen, the people and cultures I've interacted with, and the progress I've made in French and German, I realize that every moment I've spent frustrated, excited, anxious or confident during my language studies has been worth it. 

"I'm studying French and pursuing a... teaching license because of how impactful my foreign language teachers here and in high school have been."

Rad Cuebas

German wasn't taught at my high school, so I wasn't able to begin formally studying it until I enrolled at Tennessee Tech University. I originally intended to get a bachelor's degree in Biology with a minor in German. Once I began learning German, it changed my mind completely. At the time I was specifically pursuing microbiology. I thought about my future and how I would most likely end up working in a lab. Just the thought of not working with and meeting new people made the future off-putting. I enjoyed biology but I didn't feel like I was going to be able to share my knowledge with others.

I have promoted learning a second language ever since I realized the opportunities it gave me. I wanted to learn German because it allows me to interact with people in various age groups either

by teaching them about things I have learned while studying or by learning from their experiences. I never realized how many windows would open to me by learning a second language. I met and befriended many German students studying for a semester at my university. Our mutual interest in each other's culture and language made our friendships stronger.

In the summer of 2016 I had the opportunity to study abroad in Berlin, Germany. I attended the German Language School of Berlin and lived with a host family in the center of the city. This was the first time I had ever left the United States and the first time I was able to test my German-speaking capabilities outside of the classroom. I was very nervous at first, but as I became immersed in the culture and



city, it became much easier to speak with others. While abroad I was able to see two of my best friends from Germany again. We met in Munich and spent the whole day walking around the city together. It had been two years since I had seen one of them, but it felt as though we had been seeing each other every day.

My foreign language studies have helped me connect with people from other countries, form life-long friendships, experience other cultures first-hand and, most importantly, travel. 🇩🇪

"My foreign language studies have helped me connect with people from other countries, form life-long friendships, experience other cultures first-hand and, most importantly, travel."

Elisabeth Lomax



I began learning Spanish eight years ago during my freshman year of high school. To some people eight years is a long time

to study a foreign language and not be "fluent." However, studying a foreign language is an ongoing process that is much more complex than simply going to class and doing homework. Most people don't realize how much patience and practice a foreign language requires. That said, I would not

change my major for anything, and I encourage anyone who is interested to start learning a new language today!

Furthermore, by not passing up the opportunity to further my foreign language studies, I was able to participate in the study abroad program at TTU. This past spring I studied

see "Lomax," next page

"I am grateful to the foreign language department at TTU; with its help, I have finally discovered what I want to do in life, and how I can achieve it."

"Lomax," continued

abroad for 12 weeks in Seville, Spain, at a language school, and I can honestly say it was a life-changing experience. Studying abroad in a foreign country not only teaches you a lot about other people; it also teaches you a lot about yourself.

After I graduate, I plan to become a medical interpreter

or an interpreter/translator. Like many of us, I want to feel as if my job makes a difference in the lives of others; therefore, I am choosing to pursue a career as a medical interpreter. It is essential that someone is available to communicate with and advocate for our Spanish-speaking population in

hospitals in order to assure that they, too, receive adequate health care.

I am grateful to the foreign language department at TTU; with its help, I have finally discovered what I want to do in life and how I can achieve it. 🌈

German Students Travel to Berlin



For the seventh time in recent years, the German program at TTU, led by Julia Gruber, associate professor of German, took students on a spring break study trip to Germany's capital, Berlin. Eight students participated this year, and Josie McQuail, professor of English, also accompanied the group.

Students stayed with German and Turkish-German host families and learned about the German *Alltag* (everyday life). They tasted new food, met new people, tried new modes of transportation and spoke the language they had learned in the classroom.

Their local guide, Stefano Rutigliano, picked everyone up from the airport, introduced the students to their host families, and handed each student a public transportation ticket and a subway map.

Each year Rutigliano circles a different stop on the map for students to find the very next day. This is the first of many adventures, since many students are not accustomed to using public transportation. Miraculously and impressively no one has ever been late to this first meeting, other than Professor Gruber!

The group strolled through Berlin and visited several museums, among them the Story of Berlin, an interactive museum which provides an overview of the history of Berlin. They also visited the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation and learned about Germany's

political scene. Students went to the Museumsinsel (an island in the city center which houses Berlin's most important collections) and learned about the Cold War and the Berlin Wall. Rutigliano led the group to the city of Potsdam and the site of the concentration camp in Sachsenhausen. Finally, everyone attended a Goethe play at the Deutsches Theater.

This trip is always a highlight in the academic year, and is highly recommended for all students who are currently enrolled in German classes. 🌈



Undergraduates Participate in Research

This was a very successful academic year for our students working on various research projects. Julia Ponton and Clark Dycus presented posters at the TTU Research and Creative Activities Day 2016. Ponton (pictured below) explained her research on the impact of the exile experience in the work of Américo Castro, one of the most influential Span-



ish historians. Dycus focused on the Columbian exchange and its cultural and biological consequences. Both students received stimulating comments from the public, and Ponton won one of the event's awards.

In addition, Bailee Michaels (pictured upper right) was selected to present a paper in the prestigious National Conference on Undergraduate Research 2016, organized by the Council on Undergraduate Research and hosted by the University of North Carolina, Asheville. Michaels read her paper on memory and history of the Guatemalan Civil War. This was a great opportunity for



Michaels to present her work and meet other outstanding students from universities around the country who are interested in research and graduate school. Next year this conference will be hosted by the University of Memphis. We expect an even larger representation from our department at that event.

Senior Capstone Experiences: 2015-16

Student names, their topics and the faculty with whom they worked for their foreign languages senior capstone projects are indicated below:

Mariah Dean (w/ Villalba), "*A través los lentes de Freud: Un análisis de las películas de Luis Buñuel*" [Through a Freudian Lens: An Analysis of Luis Buñuel's Cinema]

Erin Ekart (w/ Groundland), "*La ingeniería química de España y los Estados Unidos*" [Chemical Engineering in Spain and in the United States]

Josh Jennings (w/Sheehan), "*Migration und Integration:*

Deutschland und die syrischen Flüchtlinge" [Migration and Integration: Germany and the Syrian Refugees]

Jennifer Montgomery (w/ Villalba), "*La comparación de las Tasas de Graduación entre de la Universidad de Tennessee Tech y la Universitat de València*" [A Comparison of TTU and Universitat de València Graduation Rates]

Jordan Potter (w/Hays), "*Rectifications de l'orthographe française: Un survol des changements présentés par l'Académie Française au moyen de son Dictionnaire jusqu'aux ceux de nos jours proposés par le Conseil supérieur de la langue française.*" [Corrections to French

spelling: An Overview of the Changes Introduced by the French Academy in its Dictionary up through those Proposed Presently by the Superior Council of the French Language]

Chris Refer (w/Barnard), "*Le Français en Amérique du Nord*" [French in North America]

Austin Thayer (w/Barnard), "*L'Economie algérienne*" [The Algerian Economy]

Alison Wheatley, (w/Laurila), "*El papel del estatus socioeconómico en la adquisición de una segunda lengua*" [The Role of Socioeconomic Status in the Acquisition of a Second Language]

Students Meet Former U.S. Ambassadors



On Nov. 5, 2015 five students from TTU attended a panel discussion on international jobs and careers at David Lipscomb University. The panel, sponsored by the Tennessee World Affairs Council, featured presentations and an in-depth Q&A with professionals in a range of different fields, from diplomacy to engineering. The TTU contingent also had the opportunity to have dinner with Ambassador Dick Bowers, former U.S. ambassador to Bolivia, and Ambassador Ronald Schlicher, former principal deputy assistant coordinator for counterterrorism and former U.S. ambassador to Cyprus.

The participating TTU students, who took advantage of transportation organized by Debbie Barnard, associ-



ate professor of French in the Department of Foreign Languages, said that the panel gave them a better idea of the scope of possible careers in the international sector and showed them many ways that their degrees could lead to jobs overseas.

"I almost didn't come because I have a test tomorrow, but I'm so glad I did," said Alejandra Tohalino, a junior at TTU, immediately after the event. "This is something I would have regretted missing, because how often do you get to have a first-hand perspective about this type of career?"

TTU student Mark Wilson said, "I really appreciated hearing from people who are in those fields, and I really appreciated their honesty about the things you have to take into consideration before taking that career path. They gave me a lot to think about."

Senior Jorjenna Ellis said that the event opened her

eyes to new possibilities. "I had never considered NGO work before," she said. "I guess I just never thought of it as an option. I'm going to look into it and learn more about it."

English and German major Olivia Hendricks added, "Please thank everyone who put this on for us. Their perspectives were really helpful, and I'm really grateful they took the time to talk with us. I really enjoyed it."

The attendees also appreciated the chance to spend time talking with their fellow foreign language students. They are especially pleased that this is going to become a regular event, and hope that other TTU students can attend future panels. The Tennessee World Affairs Council holds two international jobs & careers panels each year, and the Department of Foreign Languages hopes to help students attend the panel in October 2016. 🇺🇸

German Major Receives Internship

Congratulations to former German Klub president Olivia Hendricks, who landed an internship with Würth in Bad Mergentheim! Hendricks convinced the company that she was the

one for the job during a phone interview conducted in German. She was in Germany from mid-May to mid-August 2016, where she worked in the Department of Communications. 🇩🇪

Foreign Language Clubs

French Club (*Avant-Garde*)



Academic year 2015-2016 was full of exciting activities for *Avant-Garde*. The advanced conversation hour enjoyed the participation of students from Livingston Academy (see photo above) whose teacher, Stephen Henson, is a DFL alumnus. In addition to continuing the advanced conversation hour, Presi-

dent Sarah Gillespie also started a beginners' conversation hour. The beginners' hour met every two weeks and allowed students just starting their French studies to play games, learn more about French culture, and meet others studying French.

In the fall, *Avant-Garde* held its annual Zombie Potluck; participants brought food to share and watched the French psychological thriller, "He Loves Me... He Loves Me Not." The club also traveled to the Frist Center for the Visual Arts in Nashville

and held several French movie nights.

In the spring, *Avant-Garde* held three crêpe workshops as a fundraiser. Participants learned how to make crêpe batter, got to practice making (and eating!) crêpes, and received a booklet of recipe suggestions and information on the history of crêpes. In addition to continuing the conversation hours and movie nights, *Avant-Garde* also participated in Window on the World by selling *macarons* and distributing information about French language and culture. 🇫🇷

Faculty Advisor:
Debbie Barnard, Ph.D.
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German Club (*Der Deutsche Klub*)

The German Club's annual Oktoberfest took place Oct. 15 of last year. More than 70 students, faculty and community members attended the event and enjoyed bratwurst, potato salad and sauerkraut prepared by TTU German students. Club president Olivia Hendricks opened the event by discussing how Germany continues to be an economic and cultural

force in the world.

In the spring, the Club sold *kaffee und kuchen* (coffee and cake) at TTU's Window on the World festival, held this year on April 9. TTU German students followed authentic German recipes to create a delectable variety of apple cakes, chocolate tortes, and lemon bars for festival attendees. 🇩🇪



Faculty Advisors:
Julia Gruber, Ph.D.
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Martin Sheehan, Ph.D.
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Spanish Club (*Amigos*)

This was another exciting year for *Amigos*, the TTU Spanish Club. As it is every year, the conversation

hour was the core activity of the organization. This activity allows students from all levels to practice and im-

prove their oral skills in Spanish in a friendly and informal environment. This year beginners came

Faculty Advisor:
Manuel Villalba, Ph.D.
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See "Amigos," next page

"Amigos," continued

together to perform funny role-play situations, and advanced students discussed cultural aspects of the Hispanic world.

Fall 2015 kicked off with the *Día de los Muertos* celebration, which included free Mexican food, music, crafts and games. This event was sponsored by the TTU Student Government Association

and its S.O.L.O. Fund. Many students and professors came to this celebration of Latino culture.

In April, *Amigos* participated once again in Window on the World. At this event the members of the club, with the assistance of Mark Groundland, shared cultural information with visitors. In this and other

events, the club strives to increase campus and community awareness of the Spanish-speaking world.

Amigos will be back next year to offer exposure to the Spanish-speaking world with its rich and diverse cultures. Join in the fun activities in fall 2016!

¡¡¡Hasta la vista!!! 🇪🇸

Alpha Mu Gamma



On April 12, 2016, Epsilon Kappa, TTU's chapter of Alpha Mu Gamma, the national foreign languages honor society, inducted 15 new members.

Philip Campana, professor emeritus of German from Tennessee Tech University, spoke about his personal journey with foreign languages and their importance in today's global marketplace.

During the induction ceremony each new member was recognized for his or her outstanding achievements while learning French, German or Spanish here at TTU. The inductees were:

FRENCH

- Rebecca Franey
- Hannah Jared
- Samantha Seay*
- Kathryn Trebing
- Ashley Wheeler

GERMAN

- David Bynum
- Brian Kilgore
- Emma LaPrade

SPANISH

- Isabel Badoe
- Jesse Bohannon
- Miranda Frogge
- Trey Henderson
- Kendra Hundt
- Rachel Pettross
- Lindsey Robinson

*also inducted for German

Faculty Advisor:
Martin Sheehan, Ph.D.
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Foreign Language Scholarships Awarded

Students selected for foreign language scholarships for 2016-17 were:

Faculty and Alumni Scholarship: Sarah Gillespie, French major

Alberta Campana Memorial Scholarship: Matthew Shults, German and electrical engineering major

Fredrick Heina Memorial Scholarship: Rad Cuebas, German major

Funds for the above awards come from alumni, faculty and friends of the department. Anyone who wishes to make a donation to one of these scholarships should specify the name of the

award to which they want to contribute.

Askey FL Scholarships are generously provided each year by Thelma Askey. Winners for this year were Bethany Shelton, Spanish major, and Kathryn Trebing, French and Journalism major. 🇪🇸

Faculty Spotlight

Debbie Barnard, Associate Professor of French



I am from the Charlotte, North Carolina, area. I did my undergraduate work at Western Carolina University and my graduate work at Vanderbilt University. As an undergraduate I

studied French, German and Spanish; I loved foreign languages, but was convinced I didn't want to be a teacher, so I added in political science and economics, with an eye to either the Foreign Service, or International Development. During the summer before my senior year of college, I had an internship with an international aid organization and saw that I'd be better suited for another career. I wanted to make a positive difference in people's lives, and when I thought about who had influenced my life

the most, I realized it had been my professors. French had always been my favorite of the foreign languages I'd studied, so I decided to go to graduate school in French.

In graduate school I took a seminar in African literature, and was hooked. I began reading as many books by African authors as I could, and decided that I wanted to specialize in North African literature. The layers of identity and alterity in Albert Memmi's works spoke to me, and I began working on Judeo-
See "Barnard," next page

Faculty Accomplishments: Highlights from 2015-16

Debbie Barnard had two articles that were accepted for publication and will be forthcoming in 2016: "How Art Assuages History: The Role of Nostalgia in Judeo-Tunisian Literature." *Journal of North African Studies* and "Old Stories, New Histories: The Past in the Francophone Tunisian Novel." *Contemporary French and Francophone Studies*.

Julia Gruber gave a paper entitled, "Symmetries: Transforming a Chemist's Discoveries into Aperiodic Mosaic Life Writing in Eva Menasse's novel *Quasikristalle*" (2013) at the SCMLA conference in

Nashville, Tenn. She is also the president of TTU's chapter of AAUP.

Mark Groundland continues to index journal articles for the Modern Languages Association International Bibliography and is a member of the editorial board for *The Coastal Review*.

Colleen Hays presented a paper entitled, "Beur-French Romances in Recent French comedies: Post-Colonial Mimicry or a Challenge to Essentialist Identities?" at the American Comparative Literature Conference in Seattle.

Marketta Laurila served as the Academic Audit Leader

for Pellissippi State Community College's review of their foreign language program.

Martin Sheehan traveled to Harvard University to present a paper entitled, "Gestures of Social (Dis)integration in *Pioneers in Ingolstadt*" at the annual American Comparative Literature Association conference.

Manuel Villalba's critical edition, *Correspondencia (1924-1974): Jorge Guillén / Américo Castro*, was accepted for publication by the Fundación Jorge Guillén (Valladolid, Spain) and will soon be in print.

"Barnard," continued

Tunisian literature, specifically. My research interests have focused on the role of religion and language in cultural identity, specifically Tunisia. I incorporate them into my teaching by offering courses on North African literature, and through a course I developed, Cultures and Peoples of North Africa (FLST 2520/3520).

I'm happy to see the French section expanding beyond France and offering more courses and discussions on the francophone world. Being able to speak French has taken me to many parts of the world I dreamed about visiting as a child, so it's my hope that everyone who studies French realizes just how wide-

ly spoken it is, and just how many different places—Europe, Africa, Asia—it can take them. I hope that at some point the Department of Foreign Languages will be able to expand its offering of collaborative courses and begin to include study trips that pair foreign language majors with majors from other disciplines.

Alumni Updates

We recently mailed surveys to FL alumni from the past several decades in an effort to update our records. We were pleased to hear back from several of our graduates, and have included a few of their names below. (For additional information, please see the "Life After TTU" section of our web site: www.tntech.edu/cas/fl.)

If you haven't yet returned your survey to us, please do so. And if we inadvertently omitted you from the mailing, we extend our apologies; please let us know what and how you're doing. Contact Ms. Pam Kirkpatrick, Adm. Assoc. of the Dept. of Foreign Languages, via e-mail at pkirkpatrick@tntech.edu or by regular mail at TTU Dept. of Foreign Languages, P.O. Box 5061, Cookeville, TN 38505.

Hannah Abbotoy (Spanish, 2012) has taught Spanish and other subjects in a home-school cooperative. She currently works for an appraiser

and is also the secretary of a non-profit organization.

Deanna (Light) Amar

(Spanish, 1990) is an export analyst for Kimberly-Clark's International Division in Atlanta.

Brittney Barker (Spanish w/ Licensure, 2010) taught Spanish for a few years at Cookeville High School. She now lives in Philadelphia, Penn., and travels the world as an international flight attendant with a major U.S. carrier.

Joy Wood Bush (French, 1965) is a retired teacher and is now heavily involved in volunteer work, such as in the local library's literacy program in Grand Junction, Colo.

Jessica Cole (French, 2013) has accepted a French teaching position at Livingston Academy in Overton County, Tenn.

Meredith (Womac) Cook (German, 2007) is a stay-at-

home mom and children's book author and illustrator. She enjoys occasionally hosting immersion playgroups to teach young children a bit of German language and culture. She and her family recently relocated to New York City; they particularly appreciate the rich cultural diversity of their new community.

Everett Dahl (German, 2013) is a German teacher at Ridge View High School in Columbia, S. Carolina.

Brandon Q. Day (Mechanical Engineering and German, 2015) is a chassis design engineer for Nissan.

Charles M. Eldridge (Foreign Languages & Engineering, 1956) is retired from the U.S. Army Missile Command (Redstone Arsenal, Ala.). Since retirement he has worked with many different companies as a consultant.

Carolyn Hassler Farley (Spanish, 1983) is a professional musician who performs

See "Alumni," next page

New Course on North Africa Offered

Cultures and Peoples of North Africa (FLST 2520/3520) is a new course that focuses on Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia.

The 2520 version of the course counts as a humanities elective for General Education, and the 3520 course counts as an upper-level elective.

During the course of the semester, topics will include

the history, geography, art, culture, language, politics and economy of each country, and how these factors affect the region as a whole. Starting in fall 2016,



the course will incorporate Creative Inquiry as part of TTU's current Quality Enhancement Plan. Students will explore the question, "What impact has geography had on North Africa?" from several different angles. A trip to Morocco is planned for December 2016 so that students can experience the region first-hand.

"Alumni," continued

in the Washington, D.C. area. She says that she continues to use her Spanish to communicate with people "all over the D.C. area" and has also traveled abroad to Spain and France with her husband, Ken.

Camron Gray (Spanish and Music Education, 2015) is working toward his Masters of Music in vocal performance at the University of Michigan.

David Hixson (Spanish, 2013) is currently a manager with Kroger and is working toward becoming a Spanish teacher.

Erin Michelle (Smith) Howard (Spanish, 2003) has been with Bluegrass Community and Technical College in Kentucky since 2005. She currently serves as the Latino outreach coordinator there.

Holley LaFever (German, 2009) taught English in Germany for nine months

on a Fulbright ETA grant, then worked for four years in South Korea as a guest English teacher. She returned to the U.S. earlier this year.

Lindsey McEwen (Spanish, 2008) has taught Spanish at Franklin High School in Williamson County, Tenn., since 2009.

Lisa Dissel McIntire (Spanish, 2001) spent several years after graduation from TTU teaching and traveling, then returned to school to become a pastry chef. Currently she is a stay-at-home mom and reports that she also enjoys tutoring her 16 nieces and nephews in Spanish.

Kathy Perdue (German, 1995) is vice-president of technology at Progressive Savings Banks and Rains Agency, Inc. She and her husband, Donald, have three children: Katie, Erin and Clayton. Katie is currently a freshman at TTU.

Jordan Potter (French, 2016) has been selected by the French Ministry of Education to participate in its Teaching Assistant Program in France, and will be teaching English during the 2016-2017 school year in the académie of Orléans.

Summer (Maberry) Reed (Spanish, 1998) is currently the stay-at-home mom of three children. She says she enjoys using her foreign language experience in teaching her family and passing down the love of language to them.

Austin Thayer (French, 2016) has accepted a position teaching French at Chuckey-Doak High School in Greene County, Tenn.

James A. White (French, German & Biology, 2009) is currently a Ph.D. candidate in medieval history at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Canada, where he expects to complete his work in May 2017.

Alumni Spotlight: Marshal White, German and History



I graduated from Tennessee Tech University in 2010 with majors in both German and History. I originally wanted to be a college professor, but those times were not the best economically in our country, and I saw that going into a Ph.D. program in liberal arts might lead to hardships that I had no wish to bring upon myself. That summer I spent a lot of time thinking about what I wanted to do with my life, and I decided to take a year off from school before applying to programs aimed at a career in public service in the State Department.

In researching a new choice of career, however, I realized that this line of work would require a great amount of time, effort and personal sacrifice, and might not be enjoyable or

rewarding to me. I wanted to return to Europe; I had studied abroad at the Universität Trier in the Mosel Valley (Germany's most prestigious wine region), and also had taken trips to Italy and Greece with the TTU department of history. While in Germany I was introduced to wine, and that interest grew through interactions with a friend of my father's who grew wine grapes on his dairy farm in my native Overton County; I occasionally helped in his vineyard.

Around this time I lost my grandfather, with whom I was close. He had grown up farming in rural Overton county and later managed a nursery with my grandmother. The idea of a career that embraced both my family's agricultural roots and the knowledge I had gained about growing plants from my

grandfather appealed to me. An opportunity arose for an apprenticeship with a small winegrower in the village of Oberemmel, Germany, near Trier, and I took it.

The Mosel Valley produces exquisite wines, but at a high cost: the labor is back-breaking, with vineyards so steep that you can barely stand up. Because this difficulty is well-known in the wine industry, a stint working there looks really great on a resume.

After Mosel Valley I went on to work at excellent wineries in northern Virginia and in North Canterbury on New Zealand's South Island. In 2012 I came to the Santa Cruz Mountains, one of California's most exalted areas for the growing of fine wine grapes. I still work there, at Thomas Fogarty Winery, where I am cellar master.

I believe that studying abroad in Germany set me on the path that I have walked. Recently I returned to Germany as part of a delegation from a trade group in order to attend the international wine trade shows Prowein in Dusseldorf. I also represent the Austrian cooperative Pauscha in California; my ability to speak German was very helpful in establishing a relationship with that company. 🇩🇪